

Absence of Light

by SongsofPsyche1945

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Summary: After the battle of five armies is won, Thorin lives but is in a coma, and Fili has gone insane from being locked inside the mountain by the mad king. Now Kili must rule, but how can he when he barely knows anything about running a kingdom? AU-everyone lives.

1. Chapter 1

This is slightly AU-all the dwarves survived the BOFA and it will not be following canon.

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"You! What is that in your hand?"

Thorin's loud voice echoed throughout the halls of Erebor. Kili immediately dropped both his hands and looked up at Thorin, but his uncle was not pointing at him, he was pointing at Fili. For the last day and a half, Thorin had been searching for the Arkenstone, and with each passing minute he became more violent, more angry and more suspicious of his own kin.

Fili had been showing Kili an ornate bracelet he had found, just a curiosity and certainly not the Arkenstone.

Fili opened up his hand and showed his uncle.

"It's nothing of importance-."

"Give it here, no treasure is worth your attention." Thorin growled angrily, gesturing towards Fili, who took a step backwards, leery of his Uncle.

"It's just-."

"NO!" -

Thorin then lunged at Fili, pulling him up to his side by grabbing his hair. Thorin ran his fingers through the thick golden strands with one hand, which the other gripped a fistful tightly. Fili winced, but the more he struggled, the stronger Thorin's grip became.

"What are you doing?" Kili asked, in horror.

"Of golden hair, and light. It shall be mine! No one except the king is worthy of such gold." Thorin whispered, pulling out his knife.

"Stop it! This is madness! Put him down!" Kili shouted, now realizing what Thorin intended to do.

Thorin ignored him as he pushed Fili to the ground, and used his knife to shear off handful after handful of his long golden hair. Kili felt his mouth open, what was Thorin doing? To have your hair cut short was the greatest punishment a dwarf could receive, saved for the harshest of criminals; murderers and rapists and the like. Kili knew deep down that in Thorin's maddened mind, he had only wanted Fili's hair because it reminded him of the treasure surrounding him but still-

Fili cried out in pain and terror as Thorin continued to hack at his hair with the knife and-

"Thorin!" a voice shouted, and Kili looked up to see Balin and the rest of the company staring at them. Thorin dropped Fili on the ground and picked up a handful of golden hair.

"Behold, the gold of Durin! Riches of the King's line!" he said, waving the hair and giving them a half mad smile.

"Thorin. What have you done? You need to stop this madness. Soon there will be an army outside this mountain and it will fall if we don't defend it." Balin said firmly.

"Riches such as this shall not go be fouled in battle. Gold must stay inside the tomb, where only the worthy can access it. It shall remain a priceless treasure, locked away under the mountain with the coins and gems of a thousand years" Thorin grabbed Fili, pulling him upright from the ground.

"Come, we must hurry. Before the battle starts." Thorin said gripping Fili's arm in his hand and pulling him forward. Fili had no choice but to follow him. Then Thorin started walking, not leading them to the armory but deep into the mountain. He ignored the shouts from Balin and the pleading from Kili as he stopped in front of a huge wall vault. He walked over to it and took something out of his pocket—a gold, round key. He placed it in the vault keyhole and turned it until it unlocked. He swung the door open and stared inside the blackness for a moment, and then he turned to them, eyes alight with the sickness that plagued him.

"Gold shall not be fouled. We shall lock it away where it will never tarnish."

"Thorin-."

"Do as I say!"

"Thorin-."

"I AM YOUR KING. Put the gold inside, now!" Thorin shouted, and then he pulled Fili up, and with an exceedingly strong arm he pushed Fili into the vault and slammed it shut with one quick motion.

"NO!" Kili shouted, but Balin held him back.

"You cannot do this to him. He is your nephew, he is your heir. Please, please let him go. Take me inside. Thorin! Thorin!" Kili's shouts were useless as Thorin silently tucked the key back into his pocket and then walked away from the vault.

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Kili stared up around him, at the old halls of Erebor but he felt no joy. They had won the mountain, but had paid a steep price for it. Thorin had defeated Azog but not without serious injury. He was bedridden, and still unresponsive to all treatment.

And Fili.

Poor, poor Fili.

The battle had lasted three days, and for three days Kili could not get near his brother. They weren't able to get to him for three whole days. Three days in the dark, gasping for air and breathing in the fumes of coal and dragon fire. Kili had no idea what to expect, and part of him feared that when he finally opened the door he would find a corpse instead of his brother.

After the men and elves had finally left, and the doors of Erebor closed did Kili finally turn to Balin.

"Fili." Kili said, and without another word he ran down the hallways, towards the vault that Thorin had sealed his brother into. Balin was a step behind him.

"I have the key here. I took it from Thorin after he fell. It's the only thing that will open the vault door." He said.

Kili all but grabbed the key and shoved it in the lock. It clicked, but before he could pull it open Balin stopped him.

"Balin-."

"I don't know what we are going to find on the other side. Three days is a long time to stay in the darkness. Are you prepared for the consequences?" Balin asked

Kili nodded without hesitation, "He is my brother." He said.

And then he pulled open the door as fast as he could.

"Fili?" he asked into the pitch blackness, he shined the lantern he had taken from the great halls up high and saw his brother huddled in

the corner of the vault, shivering against the cold. The air was thick and muggy, filled with mine dust and darkness. It made Kili dizzy just breathing it, and he wondered how Fili had managed to stay alive for three days breathing in this poison. Kili saw his breath condensed and suddenly was furious at Thorin. How did he not know that it would be freezing and poisonous in the vault? In his maddened state did he not realize that Fili could have died?

"Fili?" Kili asked again, this time stepping inside the vault, and towards his brother. Fili was in a sorrowful state, with his long curly hair chopped short, it fell in ragged clumps against his face. All of his braids were gone, and Kili felt his heart pang for his brother.

Kili knelt down next to him, and reached out to touch him, but Fili jerked his head away from him with a muffled "don't".

"Fili-."

"Please, just let me die, here." Fili mumbled, hiding his face in his hands and curling up against the wall.

Kili sighed. How on earth was he going to fix this? If Thorin passed, then Fili would be the next in line to rule, and Fili was in no state of mind to even stand up right now. Even if they did manage to get Fili out of the vault and into proper care, what would the others think of him? Would they truly follow a leader with short hair-a symbol of crime and shame?

"Come on Fili, let's get you warmed up." Kili said, reaching for his brother, who in turn flinched away from him. Fili was talking into the wall, but Kili had no idea what his brother was saying. The room was too dark, and it was hard when his brother refused to look him in the eye. Kili scooted closer and gripped Fili's shoulder.

"Please, Fili. The battle is over. The mountain is ours. Let's get out of the foul place." He said again, trying to pull Fili away from the stone walls, but Fili wouldn't budge.

Kili sighed, if Thorin did pass, and Fili wasn't fit to rule, then he Kili would be king. He couldn't rule the kingdom, he was just a lad who had barely come of age.

By then both Balin and Dwalin had entered the vault. Dwalin bend down, and in one swift motion scooped Fili up in his arms. Fili, in turn struggled against him, trying desperately to be free of him.

Kili made a motion to go forward, but Balin stopped him. "He doesn't know where he is, lad. Best let Dwalin take care of this."

Kili listned to his brothers screams as Dwalin carried him outside.

How had it come to this?

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Sometimes I feel like a broken record, but I have to say this

again:

I am very serious about my work. I write because I love it. With that said, I want to take a moment to talk about respecting the works that are on here.

I totally will accept constructive criticism, everyone should, it's the only way we can become better writers but I will not accept hateful comments. Constructive criticism is defined as the process of offering valid and well-reasoned opinions about the work of others, usually involving both positive and negative comments, in a friendly manner rather than an oppositional one. The purpose of ****constructive criticism**** is to improve the outcome. It basically comes down to this: I can write whatever I want, and if you don't like it, that's fine but please be respectful of my work. If you have a problem with it, please message me and I promise we will talk it out.

We are all on here because we love to read and write fanfiction, and I fully support everyone who reads, writes and posts on here. Some write because they want to tell a story, others write as a way to cope with their past and to heal, and some write purely because they love it.

Respect your fellow authors, respect yourself.

Peace and love,

Songsofpsyche.

2. Chapter 2

Still AU.

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Balin gave a heavy sigh, and once again wondered how this all happened, and when it had gone all wrong. Thorin was alive but in a coma. Fili was insane, so that left Kili to rule, and Kili, well—he was just a lad. He had no idea what he was doing. The past week had dragged on for him, exhausting him and wishing for the peace of the Blue Mountains. They had taken the mountain back, but there was still a lot of work to be done. Already dwarves were arriving from the Iron Hills, looking for refuge in their capital and for work in the mining shafts. Balin had put Bofur in charge of the miners, and that had eased his plate but not by much. And Bombur—

"Balin! Balin hurry!" a voice cried out, and Balin looked up to see Kili looking down at him from the rooms in which Fili was currently being kept.

"What is it?" Balin asked, quickening his step as he ran up the stairs two by two. Fili had been—difficult to deal with ever since they released him from the vault. He had spent three days in the dark, gasping for air and breathing in the fumes of coal and dragon fire. In the absence of light, darkness had prevailed, overpowering him and conquering his soul. Some days were good, some days were bad. He had a few lucid moments, enough to know where he was and whom he was with. Sometimes he would sit up, and eat, and talk with Kili but other times it was like he was in his own world of chaos and

darkness. He huddled in the corner, murmuring to himself, clutching his short hair. Chanting things from his childhood, rambling on about stories that never happened.

It was mostly the latter now.

Balin knew that being trapped in the darkness was only the beginning. Thorin had cut off his hair. He might as well have raped Fili. It would have been less of a shameful act than what Thorin did. Balin had lived in the Blue Mountains, and served his time in the court of justice. Dwarves had no prisons, as they always valued their honor over anything else. A thief would have his hand cut off, a gossip would be sentenced to a week with a muzzle, an adulterer would have his forehead branded with an A. The worst punishment though, a punishment only suited for the worst crimes-rape, murder, child molestation—was cutting off the hair. A dwarf would rather have both hands cut off than have his hair cut short. It was a public symbol of shame. No dwarf with short hair was respected, as all knew what he had done to have it cut. There were colonies of short haired dwarves, called the Barzainlûg, the cursed destined to misery and dishonor on the borders of the mountain. Death was the better option.

At least, that was what Fili grew up knowing.

Now, everything was different. Fili was the first dwarf in a long time who's short hair did not indicate his crimes. It had been an accident, a terrible accident but that didn't stop the other from looking at the blonde prince with disdain and distrust.

"What is it?" Balin asked again, reaching the room and stepping inside.

"skilf eta zeitmen, skilf eta zeitmen, skilf eta zeitmen—|..**" a low whispered mantra carried over the room from the corner under the bed. An overturned breakfast tray lay on the floor, it's contents scattered. Balin looked up and saw Kili his hands shaking and covered in—|..blood?

"what happened?" Balin asked, hurrying over to Kili, looking at his hands, and looking for the source of all the blood.

"He was—|..he managed to get something sharp and he attacked me, as I came inside with breakfast—|I cant get him out., he still has it—|.." he trailed off, and Balin followed Kili's gaze to where Fili was hiding underneath the bed.

"Well, we certainly cant have him under there all day. Did he hurt you?" Balin asked

Kili nodded and showed Balin his cut palm. Balin sighed.

"Go down to Oin. He will help you. I will try to talk to your brother." Balin said

"But-."

"Oh, and if you run into Dwalin send him up, I may need assistance."

"Okayâ€¦".

Kili knew he was dismissed, he sat up from the bed and walked out of the room. Balin waited until his footsteps were gone, and then he walked slowly over to where Fili was hiding.

"Fili, lad?" he asked

"skilf eta zeitmen, skilf eta zeitmen, skilf eta zeitmenâ€¦". The mantra continued from the vicinity of the bed.

"You know, your Kuzedul gets a lot better when you're upset." Balin said, with a small smile. He knelt down and lifted up the blankets. Fili was curled up in the corner, knees tucked up to his chest, hands gripping his painfully short hair. A glint of light reflected off of a butter knife that was held in his hand, and Balin berated himself for allowing the lad to come within arms length of such a weopen. He was out of reach; Balin would need to move the bed to get to him if he refused to come.

Balin waited patiently for a lull in the mantra, and then reached to touch a bare foot. Fili's breath hitched at he peered at him through his fingers, his blue eyes shining under the short ringlets of hair.

"Hi there, Fili. Good to see you. Things would be much better though, if you were to come out from under there." Balin said

Fili flinched at his name, but the mantra continued.

"No one is going to hurt you. It's just me in here. Why don't you hand over that knife and we'll get you back to bed." Balin tried.

This time Fili stared at him, a glimmer of recognition in his blue eyes.

"Balin?" he asked in a breathless whisper

"Yes lad."

"Balin. Balin. They come at meâ€¦. with hot swordsâ€¦ and steaming platesâ€¦glaringâ€¦.asking why and saying my name over and over and over and over-."

"Fili. Fili it's okay. No one wants to hurt you. Why don't you give me that knife."

Fili shook his head, "It's mine. It was a present. It's mine. It's mine. It was a present."

"Who gave it to you?" Balin asked.

"The mice. They brought it to me on little furry legs and skittered about the room, over my legs and into my bed."

"The mice?"

"Yes. The little mice that rule under this kingdom."

"Ah. I see. Well, it looks like a very nice present. May I see it?" he asked

Fili hesitated.

"I will give it back, I promise."

Balin heard a quiet hurrumph and looked up to see Dwalin staring down at him.

"The mice?" he mouthed.

Balin nodded, and then shrugged. It was new to him too. He turned his attention back to Fili, who had crawled close enough to scoot the knife towards Balin. As soon as the knife was in reaching distance though, Fili shrank back to his corner.

"Lad, this is a stellar butter knife. Made from the finest of mouse hands, I can assure you. Now, my dear friend and brother Dwalin is here-Dwalin say hello-."

Dwalin knelt down and peered under the bed. Fili's eyes darted back and forth between them but didn't say anything.

"I'm going to let Dwalin take a look at this marvelous present of yours. Is that okay?" Balin asked

Fili nodded quietly.

Balin handed the butter knife to Dwalin, who looked at it expertly before standing back up and "making sure he was out of the lad's line of site" putting it safely in his pocket.

"We'll have to watch what the kitchen staff give him from now on. Only spoons, if we can manage." Dwalin whispered.

Balin nodded. "Good thinking. Now, how should we go about this? He cant stay under there all day."

"Did he threaten anybody with his knife?" Dwalin asked

Balin nodded, "Stabbed Kili, apparently."

"That's not good. Not good at all."

"I know. What do you suppose we do?"

Dwalin shifted his weight from one leg to the other, and then his eyes laid on the leather restraints that rested on top of the bed sheets. Balin followed his gaze.

"Kili hates it, when we have to truss him up like that." He said

"I know, but it's the only way to make sure he "and everyone around him-stays safe. We cannot have him running amok in the mountain brandishing knives, no matter how small they are." Dwalin answered.

Balin sighed, he hated seeing Fili like this. He had practically raised the lad in Ered Luin, he had been teaching him and his brother

since they were babies.

He met the eyes of his brother.

"I'll move the bed, and you'll grab him. Strap his arms down first and then I'll get his legs." He said

Dwalin nodded.

"On the count of three." He said

"Oneâ€¦.twoâ€¦..thr-."

With a burst of energy, Fili came scrambling out from under the bed. Dwalin grabbed him around the waist and hurled him onto the bed.

"His arms, grab his arms!" Dwalin shouted as he wrestled with a struggling Fili.

Balin quickly took the leather straps and secured Fili's wrists to the bed, and then moved on to the ankles. Fili wined and struggled harder once he realized what they were doing, but the straps held him down. Dwalin secured the last strapâ€”a leather band across his chest and then stepped back.

Fili struggled, his eyes seeing things only they could see. He whipped his head back and forth, cursing a mixture of kuzzedul and westron and puling against the restraints. Balin reached over and put a firm hand on Fili's leg, above the restrain.

"Fili. Fili it's okay. Just calm down. Breath in, and breath out. No one is going to hurt you." He said.

Eventually, Fili's struggles stopped and he lay still, chest moving up and down rapidly. His eyes went back and forth between Balin and Dwalin.

"There ya' go. Just breath. Its going to be okay." Balin said, watching him. Fili closed his eyes and then opened them again.

"Kili?" he asked

"Kili will be here soon, don't you worry."

Fili's brow furrowed, like he was trying to remember something important.

"I saw red. There was red on Kili. His hands. Was he painting?" he asked

Balin nodded while Dwalin shook his head.

"Kili is fine. He'll be here soon." Balin said.

Fili then struggled to sit up, eyes panicked, "Thorin. Uncle Thorin. It's his birthday, I need to get him a present."

Balin tried very hard not to role his eyes, thisâ€”unlike the

miceâ€"was not knew. Fili always said this, especially when he was restrained. It seemed to be his way of telling them he wanted to get up.

"Wait just a few more moments, Fili. Have you eaten today?" Balin asked

Fili shrugged his shoulders.

"You got him-oh." A voice made Balin turn. Kili was back, his hand in white bandages.

"We had to, lad. Just for now. They'll come off as soon as hes calmed down some." Dwalin added.

Kili forced a smile and Balin knew he hated seeing his brother like this.

"Can I?" Kili asked, pointing to the bed.

"I don't see the harm of it. I'll be over there, by the desk if you need anything." Balin said.

"Ill take my leave too, maybe go find out about his _mice _business is anything other than his rabbiting." Dwalin muttered, still holding the butter knife.

Balin watched him go, and then turned back to look at the lads.

Kili had pulled over a chair, and was sitting next his his brother. His dark hair was cascading over his face. Their eyes were locked, and Balin smiled a heavy smile.

Atleast they still had each other to hang onto.

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*Cursed

**I have no honor

If you have enjoyed this so far, please leave a review! Thanks!

3. Chapter 3

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Kili got up from the bed and pulled over a chair to sit next to Fili's bed. This past weekâ€"ever since they had pulled Fili from the vault-had been the hardest week of his entire life. He hadn't been crowned King yet, they were waiting for Dain to return from the Iron Hills to preform the ceremony, but he had worked closly with a staff of conselers every day since the mountain had been opened to other clans of dwarves.

And then there was Fili.

Kili had thought that once his brother had been taken away from the darkness, he would be okay. But he wasn't, and Kili was afraid that

he was getting worse. This morning had been rough, and it was the first time Fili had tried to injure him. Kili knew that Fili wasn't in the right state of mind, that he didn't _mean _to hurt him. But it still did.

All of this did.

Seeing his big, strong brother strapped down to the bed was one of the hardest things Kili had to deal with. He knew it was only for his protection, but he still hated it. He wanted his Fili back, the one he had conquered the mountain with. They had always been there to support each other and now Fili was gone.

Kili sighed, and then looked up at his brother.

"Hey Fee." He said softly.

Fili remained quiet, eyes darting back and forth, looking at things that Kili couldn't see.

"Do you want to sit up?" Kili asked, the bed had notches in it, so it could be raised and lowered without them undoing the restraints. Fili didn't respond.

Kili sighed again. There were some points during the day where Fili would almost be like himself. Just yesterday they played cards for an hour with no incidents, but then this morning Fili had gotten scared when Kili brought in his breakfast.

And that's when the knife came out.

It broke his heart, to see his brother like this. It was just beyond Fili mourning the loss of his hair, it was something else. Something in the darkness had caused him to withdraw within himself, and Kili had no idea how to bring his brother back to the light.

"Kili?" a thin whispered voice asked.

Kili looked at his brother and saw that Fili was looking right at him.

"Yes? Fili. I'm here." Kili said, moving closer to him.

Fili's brow furrowed, and he twisted his arms against the restraints.

"Blunt the knives, and bend the forks. That's what Baggins hates. We blunted and we bended and we took his hate, and gave it away. He's still there, bending and blunting. Will he ever stop? Why won't he stop? In my head he bangs the pots. It hurts. Make him stop? Why won't he stop?" he whispered in a low frantic voice.

"Oh Fili-."

But Kili was cut off by a high pitched laugh.

"He said we had worms. Filled with worms on the inside. Worms in our tubes. That's what he said." He laughed, and Kili winced at the shattered look in his brother's eyes.

"Bilbo did say that, didn't he? He saved us though, from the trolls."
Kili said

Fili nodded his head, and his eyes drifted towards the ceiling, eyes tracing over the deep marks that carved the room. He seemed to be lost in thought again, as if-

"Kili! Kili! they took me and wrapped me up like a present and I don't know. Uncle he took the gold, he took it away from me and I can't find it. Why did he take it? Why is it gone? What did I do?" he twisted more against the ropes and looked at Kili with broken eyes.

"Oh Fili. It's okay. You didn't do anything. Uncle wasn't in the right mind. He didn't mean to." Kili said, trying to make sense of Fili's babbling.

"Why? Why did he take it, and put me in that dark place?"

Kili sighed. Fili always asked this, almost everyday, about why Thorin did what he did. Fili seemed to remember that "being pulled into the vault" more than he remembered being locked inside it. Sometimes he accepted Kili's answers, and sometimes he didn't. It was a never-ending circle.

"He didn't mean to, Fili. He was sick. And you're out of there now. We saved you." Kili said, putting his hand on Fili's, but Fili twitched his hand away with a gasped inhale and he shook his head rapidly back and forth.

His blue eyes were shining with tears; "No. No, no, no, no! I accepted death, welcomed it and then you came and tore me away from it. I was ready and you brought me back. I didn't want this, I never wanted to be saved." He laughed, a high brittle laugh that brought Kili no peace.

"Now I am here forced to walk among the shamed, you did me no favors, brother. You should have let me die!"

His face crumbled, and he squirmed in place, trying to break free of the leather straps that held him down.

"Oh Fili-."

"Leave."

"What?"

"Leave me here. I can't-not now. I can never-please. Just go." He said, eyes still shut tight.

"But-."

"Please?"

The last plea was a brittle whisper, and Kili sighed.

He stood up.

"Alright. I'll be back in a bit."

He felt terribly leaving his brother like this, but this was the first time he had requested to be alone, the first time he actually spoke about what happened. Kili didn't know if it was a breakthrough or not though, it was so hard to tell.

Kili walked out of the hallway, and ran headfirst into Balin in the hallway.

"How is he?" Balin asked

Kili shook his head, and felt his eyes welling with tears.

"He asked me to leave. He's never done that before. He always likes meâ€¦but today it was like he wanted nothing to do with me. Like he blamed me for rescuing him. He told me we should have let him dieâ€¦I just don't know how long this can go on." He said, blinking away the tears.

Balin sighed.

"Come, let's go get some tea. I think I have an idea. I'll have Dwalin come and stand outside the door."

Kili nodded, and followed Balin towards the kitchens.

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Kennie Tyrannis woke to prickly whiskers scratching against her face. She sighed, not quite wanting to get up just yet. The whiskers wisped around her face, and a sharp sand paper tongue licked her nose. She felt the bed indent as the whiskers came closer, and-

MEOW!

Kendra shot up, sending four legged furries scattering in all directions. Why did they always have to be so loud? Her life had been a lot more hectic ever since her feline companion had given birth to a little of six kittens eight weeks go. The kittens had grown to be quiteâ€¦tiring. She knew eventually she had to adopt them out to her neighbors, but she kept telling herself that just a few more days would be okay.

Then they would wake her up like this.

"Okay, okay. I'm up now. What time is it?" she looked over to her clock and it read quarter to 6.

"It would be really great if you let me sleep in, just once." She said to the nearest cat, who was sitting on her blue chair, licking it's tail with quiet content.

Rolling her eyes, Kendra got out of bed and reached for her blue robe. Everything in her room was blue; the chair, the bed, the bedding, even the wall. All different shades, ranging from a light turquoise to a dark midnight.

"Today's the day." She thought, "I'm setting up an adoption tent today."

She smiled despite herself as she watched the hoard of kittens mewl and grapple with each other.

"Or maybeâ€"no. No today is the day." She told herself firmly as she put on her blue slippers and walking out of her room and into her small but quaint house. Like her bedroom, everything was a different shade of blue. Beyond the kitchen was her apothecary, where she made tonics and medicines. She was one of the few apothecaries in Gondor, most people would go to the city healers before they came to her. She was popular amongst the lower class, because her concoctions were cheaper than the city, and she didn't prescribe leeches as a solution to everything. Kendra walked into her kitchen and bent down to restart the fireâ€"she had let it go out during the night.

She opened up her door to see if the milk had been delivered. No milk, but a letter with her name written on it in fine cursive writing was sitting on her door. She picked it up and stared at it, it was a dark burgundy envelope, but it did not have the return address on it. She flipped it open and almost dropped it as she saw the seal; a single mountain stamped in red wax.

She knew what this was, it was a letter from the King Under the Mountainâ€"Ereborâ€"seventh of the dwarven kingdoms. Curiously, she brought it into her house and for once ignoring the frantic scrambling of the kittens underfoot. She walked over to her light blue table and sat down. What would the dwarves want with her? She thought back in her memory, trying to remember something, anything that would answer her question but she came up with nothing. She had no business with the dwarves-no, that wasn't true-she she bought spices and herbs from the dwarven caravan market that came every six months. They were the only ones that sold some of the rarer herbs that she needed in the medicines that she made.

The kittens followed her, singing their chirpy songs about how hungry they were and how they would love some food. Right now. Right this very second!

"I'm coming, guys. Hold your horses." She muttered as she put the letter down on the table and got the bowls and food ready.

Once the kittens were fully satisfied, Kendra walked back into her room and changed out of her robe and nightgown into a blue day dress. She pulled her long golden hair up into a bun at the top of her head, and gave herself a once over in the mirror. She was short, but slender. Her light blonde hair seemed to make her eyes a deeper green. She quickly rearranged a wisp and sighed as the curls refused to stay put. Her hair was unlike most in Gondor, it was the color of a peeled banana, with natural highlights from the time she spent in the sun. Every time she would go out, she would have to endure the calls from the men, who seems to have an amorous fixation with her hairâ€"one of the many reasons she kept it up tight in a bun, she had no interest in starting a romantic relationship with anybody.

Once she was done dressing, she walked back over to the table and opened the letter. It had the seal of the king on it, but it was not from the king of Erebor. It was from one of his counselors. Pulling on her blue reading glasses, she sat down and read:

Dear Kendra Tyrannis,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you to ask you help us with a dire problem. A member of our royal family has been quite unwell for some time now, and we are running out of treatment options. As a last attempt to help him, I have decided to send him to you, if you are willing to take him. I have heard of you from the dwarven caravans that come through Gondor, and your reputation as one of the best healers in the realm has impressed me.

Please send your reply with the raven—it should be around there somewhere.

Sincerely,

Balin, son of Fundin.

Kendra stared at the letter. Her? Best healer in the realm? Really? She tried to think back, did she meet anybody of importance at the caravan last time? She didn't remember speaking with anybody out of the ordinary. But then again, many people bought her tonics, maybe one of them recommended her to the dwarves? She reread the letter, and wondered what ailed the dwarf in question. It must have been bad if they were willing to send him to her. She sighed, she couldn't refuse a royal request. She would have to take him.

She put down the letter and looked out the window, the letter said a raven would—.

SQUAW!

Kendra jumped back and yelled in surprise as a large black raven landed on her windowsill.

"Well, there you are." She muttered.

She quickly scribbled down a reply, and handed it back to the raven. She watched it fly off, and then turned around to view her hoard of whiskers.

She sighed. Yes. Today was the day the kittens were leaving. She was sure of it.

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Thank you for reading if you enjoyed it please leave a review, next chapter should be up soon!

4. Chapter 4

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Kili walked into the dimly lit room and breathed in the smell of dwarven incense and candles. Thorin was laying in his bed, like he did everyday since the battle. He looked at Bilbo, who just gave a small shake of his head; nothing had changed since yesterday, Thorin still hadn't woken.

"I promised myself I would leave by Friday if he hadn't woken by then, but I just can't seem to move." Bilbo said in a pained whisper. Kili walked over and put a hand on the hobbit's shoulder.

"You are welcome to stay as long as you like, Master Baggins. " he said quietly.

Bilbo nodded, and gave an involuntary sniff.

"How is Fili?" Bilbo asked, like he did everyday when Kili came to visit his uncle.

"It's hard to tell. Some days he's fine, others he'sâ€¦confused. We're trying our best." Kili said, trying to blink away tears as he remembered his dismissal earlier.

"It's going to work out just fine, Kili. If dwarves are as stubborn as I know them to be, the three of you will pull through this just fine." Bilbo said with a small smile.

"Balin said he had an idea, but he's in conferences with the consolors right now." Kili said

He and Balin had had tea earlier, and Balin had mentioned something about a healer in Gondor, but before he could give Kili any details he had been called into a meeting by the royal consolors.

"How far is Gondor from here?" Kili asked, wondering if the hobbit knew.

"It is south of here, I think."

"Like the Shire."

"Yes, I believe so. It's a long way, near the sea I believe."

Kili sighed, Gondor _was _a long ways from Erebor. But if it helped his brother, he would do it.

"Fili is in good hands, Kili. And he will get better, I promise." Bilbo said, putting a hand on Kili's shoulder.

Kili nodded, and truly hoped that the little hobbit was right.

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A few hours later, Kili quietly knocked on Fili's door hoping beyond hope that he would let him enter.

Dwalin answered the door with a quiet rumble.

"How's everything?" Kili asked

"Much better. We are playing chessâ€¦kind of." Dwalin answered and he opened the door wider. Kili hesitantly stepped inside, not sure how Fili would take to his presence. He found his brother sitting on the ground a large marble chess set and board in front of him. All the pieces were gathered at Fili's feet, some toppled over, some stacked on top of each other and one was peeking out of Fili's shirt pocket. Opposite of him, sitting on the board was a vase of daisies.

"Aye! Curse you're sudden but inevitable betrayal! Die horse master,

die!" Fili shouted as he held out two black pieces, clicking them together rapidly and laughing.

Kili suppressed a giggle. Dwalin was a very good chess player, and it was kind of him to let the game go astray for Fili's enjoyment.

"Which pieces are yours?" Kili asked

"None. I am the vase of flowers." Dwalin said, pointing to the vase on the floor.

"Oh, I see."

"But I think I'm winning. It's hard to tell." Dwalin answered with a bemused smile.

"I see things are going better than when I left this morning." Kili asked, hoping for an update.

"Aye. Much better. He brooded for about an hour, but then started asking to play chess so I let him loose of the restraints. He seems to have forgotten our rocky morning." Dwalin answered.

Kili nodded, "that's good, I guess."

"He asked about you, he's been asking every ten minutes." Dwalin said quietly.

Kili smiled, at least Fili wanted to see him again. He walked over and knelt down next to the board.

"Hey Fili." He said

Fili gave him a broad smile, and he almost looked like the old Fili—"except that his hair was painfully short.

"Kili! Here, have some mice. We can play, you can be the third player. I think that's right. The rules. It doesn't break any rules. The mice whispered them in my ears." He said, handing him seven pieces and motioning for him to set them up on the board.

Kili nodded and smiled.

For the next hour they played a very modified version of chess, which included a pair of dice, the daisies and lots of grumblings from Dwalin about the _right _way to play chess. In the end, Fili declared the mice as the winners, and then asked Kili if they could go to the market to get Uncle something for his birthday.

Kili looked at his brother's hopeful eyes and felt his heart break as he shook his head no.

"The market is closed now, Fili. We can go tomorrow." He said.

"Aye lad, I will be at the smithy later today. I can pick something up for your uncle if you wish." Dwalin added.

Fili nodded, and then started rearranging the figures by type; bishop, knight, pawn.

"If you don't mind, I'm going to take a breather. Mahal bless you, Kili." Dwalin then said, standing up and walking towards the door.

"I am a holler away if you need me." He said

"Thank you, Dwalin."

Kili looked over the board, and at Fili's triangular arrangements of the pieces.

"Fili?" he asked

He waiting until Fili was looking at him, to continue.

"Do you remember the quest we went on? With Dwalin and Uncle Thorin?" he asked, hoping that maybe if he sparked some memories, Fili would be able to find his way through the darkness and back to him.

"Quest? We needed a burglar?" Fili asked

"Yeah. Mr. Baggins. You remember him, right? We went to his house, and had dinner and then in the morning we set out on our quest." Kili urged him.

Fili nodded, "There were more than just us. Twelve total, thirteen with Mr. Baggins. Balin, Dwalin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, Oin, Gloin, Ori, Dori and Nori and you and Uncle." Fili said, counting the names off on his fingers.

"Yes, yes that's right."

"We walked, walked and talked. Bilbo he wanted his handkerchiefs. And then there was trolls who wanted our boots for soup. Did we find the mountain, Kili? Did we slay the dragon?" Fili asked, looking up at him.

Kili nodded, "Yes, yes brother we did. We took our homeland back, and we slew the dragon. We are home now. In Erebor."

"This is home?"

"Yes."

"No. No. No. No No. Home was where Ma would cook stew on the fire, and sing sweet lullabies in our ears. This isn't home. This is cold, and empty and dark. No light. I cant find the light. Ive searched for it, looked for it, felt it but it's not here. It's not." He dropped the chess pieces and gripped his short hair in his hands.

"I'll never be able to find it."

"Oh Fili." Kili sighed, he scooted closer to his brother and wrapped his arms around his brother. Fili resisted at first, but then he clung to him, hands gripping his clothes and his hair.

"It's okay, I'm here for you. I'll help you find it." Kili whispered

as Fili gripped him tight.

"Everything is going to be okay. You'll see." He said, and hoped to all of the gods that it was true.

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Kennie stared at her garden with her hands on her hips.

The snails had gotten into her strawberries, again.

She was not in a good mood. She still had a thousand tasks to do, and the fact that she was still slightly drunk and hungover at the same time was not helping her in the slightest.

She had not ment last night to go as it did. She had ment for last night to go as she planned. But nothing ever seemed like it did. She was trying to obtain rights to open a store in the downtown market, but she had been unable to get the correct permits for it. It was hard for her to get anything done in this city, because she was a woman, and because she worked in medicine. Even though the dark ages had passed, there were still some who would deem her a witch for selling herbs and remedies. There were some who still wished to see her burned at the stake. Yesterday she had thought if she had gone to the town meeting and spoke to the market head she could get some answers. But all the men wanted to do was drink and gamble. Not her type of party, but she had played along and now her head pounded, and her vision was blurry and all she wanted to do was go to sleep, but no. The snails had gotten into the strawberries.

She sighed as she felt like a thousand little dwarves were pounding into her head with the hammers and fists.

Dwarves.

She couldn't even think about the dwarves right now.

The raven she had sent yesterday had returned, with a scoll stating that the dwarves would be there in about a month, and that she should prepare for them. It also included a detailed account of everything that had happened since Thorin Oakenshield had taken the Lonely Mountain back. Who was in a deep sleep in which no one could wake him from. Kennie desperately wished she could fall into a deep sleep where no one could wake her from.

She tromped into the strawberry thicket, wincing as drunken memories appeared in her minds eye. Had she really done that? Had she really gotten up on the table and danced until the bartender kicked her out? And did she really try to kiss him?

She winced again.

He had walked her home, and had been decent with her. He didn't even try to kiss her. A true gentlemen, yet she had pushed him away and told him to never come back because she had been hurt before and-

CAW CAW

"WHY do you keep doing that?!" she half yelled at the raven, she had

landed on his sweet pea fence, cawing to it's heart's content.

CAWWWW.

"Okay, fine." She muttered, standing up and walking towards it. She took the scroll out of it's pouch and read carefully.

_Dear Kendra, _

In the previous letter I had stated that we will be sending two dwarves to you, Fili and Kili but now it has come to our attention that a third one will need to accompany them as well. Please make arrangements for Dwalin the thirdâ€”and hopefully the lastâ€”dwarf that will be coming to Gondor.

_Thank you again, _

Balin

Kennie sighed loudly and surpressed a sob.

Three dwarves. _Three dwarves. _Will be coming to stay with her. How could she handle three when she never even ment one. Her head pounded and she sunk onto the ground, not caring that her blue skirt was getting dirty.

Could this day get any worse?

An old wrinkled face with wisps of long white hair appeared from over the fence.

"You know, the first sign of madness is talking to inanimate objects and animals."

"Thank, Ethel. I'll keep that in mind." Kennie grumbled.

Kennie sighed, scooted over to the strawberries and one by one started pulling the snails off them.

888

Okay, so I have to admit that this wasnt my best chapter, mainly because I am slightly inebriated...but you don't need to know that. Sometimes fanfiction is the only thing that keeps me going. Please be nice on the review things. Love you, songsogpsyche.

End
file.